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TM leads team in cable project

HONG KONG: Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM) is leading a consortium to develop the Asia-America Gateway Cable System, an international undersea cable system linking South-East Asia with the United States.

In conjunction with this, TM yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding with six initial parties: AiTi (Brunei), CAT Telekom (Thailand), PLDT (Philippines), REACH (Hong Kong), StarHub (Singapore) and VNPT (Vietnam).

TM Wholesale chief operating officer Datuk Baharum Salleh said the undersea cable system would route between Malaysia and the US via Hong Kong, the Philippines, Guam and Hawaii, with branches into Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Vietnam.

“This cable system is designed to support the burgeoning voice, Internet protocol/data and video traffic between South-East Asia and the US,” he said after the signing ceremony here .

The Malaysian market, he added, will see at least 20% growth in broadband traffic every year.



Datuk Baharum Salleh speaking at a press conference in Hong Kong

Baharum said the project would offer the much needed diversity to many of the traditional routes and complement the existing infrastructure of high bandwidth cable systems currently in place.

According to him, the project had the potential to be a gateway to other locations in North-East and South-East Asia, India, Australia, Africa and Europe as it was designed to provide a high degree of interconnectivity with existing and planned high bandwidth systems.

“We are still discussing with potential investors to join us to further develop this project. Maybe one or two more parties,” he said.

Construction work is expected to start by early next year, with plans for the system to be ready by 2008.

The major international suppliers for the submarine cable are NEC, Fujitsu, Alcatel and Tyco.

Baharum also said the project should provide a “comfortable” return to the TM group’s total revenue in the

near future.

The cable system will span 20,000km and use the latest dense wavelength division multiplexing technology with a minimum design capacity of about 1.28 terabytes.

The project is supported by experienced telecommunication entities with a ready customer base in their respective domestic markets. – Bernama

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